



Vol. 47, No. 29 • 374th Airlift Wing • Yokota Air Base, Japan • Friday, Aug. 4, 2006

**2 News** MySpace has operational risks to military  
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**5 Feature** Spouses clubs provide support



photos by Capt. Warren Comer

### Pre-deployment training

**Top, Tech Sgt. Allen McKenna, 730th Air Mobility Squadron, far left, and Staff Sgt. Edwin Mena, 374th Logistics Readiness Squadron, middle, learn how to take defensive positions after dismounting their humvee during the training. Mike Blasinsky, far left, shows Staff Sgt. Lashawndra Bills, 374th Airlift Wing protocol office, how to defend her position during an Expeditionary Combat Training class on Tuesday. The Pacific Air Forces sponsored training targets teaching Airmen skills before they deploy.**

## Cable contract ends in October

### Base officials planning ahead, alternate service is available

**By Capt. Warren Comer**  
 374th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The cable television and Internet service provider at Yokota Air Base will end its franchise agreement Oct. 25.

Americable International, the base's cable and Internet provider, will be debarred from doing business with the federal government, meaning the company will be excluded from receiving contracts or indirectly receiving benefits under federal non-procurement programs.

Currently, base officials are working with the Army and Air Force Exchange Service to have a new contractor come to Yokota to take over the management of cable and Internet services.

An important focus for leadership is not only to bring in a contractor that can maintain the same level of service, but also more advanced services for Yokota residents by bringing in new technologies.

The service would be equivalent to those provided to households in the United States.

"We came up with multiple options for finding a new contract to provide base residents with an integrated voice, video and data service provider. This would allow cable television, telephone and Internet services in one integrated line," said Col. Lee Wyatt, 374th Mission Support Group commander. "This is the best long-term choice to bring new telecommunications upgrades to the base community."

Base officials understand that there will be some inconvenience to residents and are working with AAFES officials to have alternative Internet services available while the new contractor establishes their network at Yokota.

One option is to use Japan Telecom, located in the

Yokota Community Center on the first floor near the frame shop. It provides a host of Internet services to include high speed and dial-up access.

"We will do everything we can to ensure we continue to provide service to the Yokota community," said Colonel Wyatt.

In order to keep base residents informed on these changes, a series of update articles will be placed in the Fuji Flyer.

"We came up with multiple options for finding a new contract to provide base residents with an integrated voice, video and data service provider."

**Col. Lee Wyatt**  
 374th Mission Support Group commander

## USFJ/Fifth Air Force commander talks about character and leadership to Airmen



photo by Airman 1st Class John Albea

**Lt. Gen. Bruce Wright, commander of U.S. Forces-Japan and 5th Air Force, spoke with Airmen about character and leadership.**

**By Capt. Ben Alumbaugh**  
 374th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Using words of encouragement, United States Forces – Japan/Fifth Air Force commander Lt. Gen. Bruce Wright talked to noncommissioned officers and company grade officers at Yokota Air Base on July 26.

Titled "What I Believe," the presentation outlined what the general has learned about leadership from his 30 plus years of military service.

The main points of the general's speech were character and leadership.

"The single most important thing I have learned in my years of military service is we are effective as a fighting force or ineffective based on the quality of

our leadership, which is based solely on our character," said the general. "Always remember that if you do what your mother, father, grandfather or grandmother taught you, you should do just fine."

"Character and effective leadership are inseparable," the general elaborated. "You will enjoy the full potential of your natural talents or you won't, based on the growth and strength of your character. Character is the foundation of all we do."

The general used the tone of encouragement to the Air Force's junior leaders because he said he found if those in command encourage those around them then great things will happen.

"Be positive, be selfless and

be bold," said the general. "Don't operate as people giving guidance only, but have that human to human interaction and lead by example."

The general also highlighted how leaders are responsible for preparing themselves and their fellow Airmen physically, mentally and spiritually to ensure they are strong on the inside and outside.

"Preparing people is also about setting the example," said the general. "If you are not giving Airmen the chance to grow mentally, then you aren't doing your job. Our service challenges people mentally."

The general made the speech interactive by calling on those in attendance to answer questions he had, and in turn, answer questions they had.

The general concluded the session by fielding questions on how the Air Force was going to move forward with doing more with fewer Airmen, the timeframe of deployments and the current world situation with North Korea and Japan.

"Senior leaders should be talking about this. You have to keep fighting and fighting harder in everything you do," said General Wright. "There is no problem too big that we can't get our arms around and make our Air Force better."

General Wright is a command pilot and has more than 3,200 flying hours, principally in fighter aircraft including 65 F-16 combat missions flown during operations Desert Storm, Provide Comfort and Deny Flight.





photo by Mark Allen

**Camp Adventure Children at Yokota Air Base make paper creations as part of the Camp Adventure summer program. Camp Adventure is contracted by the 374th Services Division. The program started June 17 and ends Aug. 18. Counselors involve the children in activities that include arts and crafts, team building, games, sports and field trips. Camp Adventure counselors are college students or recent college graduates who come here for the summer from around the nation. There are more than 90 children enrolled in the summer camp.**

## Friendship Festival two weeks away

**By Master Sgt. Dominique Brown**  
374th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Mark the calendar, the 57th Annual Japanese-American Friendship Festival is just two weeks away. On Aug. 19-20, Yokota Air Base will open its gates to an expected crowd of over 100,000 visitors during the two-day event.

The first Friendship Festival was held here in September 1949, and this year's event will mirror the traditions of previous years. The Yokota community plans to provide many different food booths, aerial demonstrations and entertainment culminating with a fireworks display the evening of Aug. 20.

"The Friendship Festival is the perfect occasion to celebrate Japanese-American friendship, to explore the traditions of our two nations and have fun while doing it," said Maj. Curtis Sutton, Friendship Festival project officer. "This is an excellent cultural exchange opportunity."

Some of the performance highlights will include: Band of the Pacific-Asia's Pacific Trends, the Yokota Samurai Taiko Team, the Yokota Tanabata Dancers and back to back performances of a variety of English and Japanese music acts performing rock, R&B, Latin, gospel and blues.

A talent show and a Strong Man Challenge will also provide opportunities for visitors to show off their skills and strengths.

The newest event to this year's festival will be a car display featuring a variety of over 40 different show cars to include race cars, rally cars and specialty cars.

Throughout the festivities, visitors can witness aerial demonstrations of more than 20 different aircraft hailing from many Japanese and American bases.

Demonstrations will include high-altitude, low-opening (HALO) personnel drops to rappelling from UH-1N Huey helicopters and C-130 personnel airdrops.

Static displays of the aircraft will be open for public viewing as well.

Private organizations will be selling items from food and drinks to face painting at 72 different booths. The food available will vary from traditional American food such as steak, hamburger and hot dogs to traditional Japanese food such as yakisoba, okonomi and fried squid.

The festival is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. each day. There is limited parking and many roads will be closed around the festival area. Community members are encouraged to walk, take the shuttle bus or bicycle to the event.

To volunteer during the festival call the Airman and Family Readiness Center at 225-8725.

## MySpace use comes with risks

**By Staff Sgt. Julie Parker**  
99th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. (AFPN) — The online site MySpace offering individuals free membership to create a personalized Web page can also serve as a vulnerability for Air Force people to post personal information that can cause problems or risk operational security.

MySpace members can share personal photos and use it to catch up with old friends from college and high school, not to mention meet new people all across the world.

According to a statement from News Corp., MySpace's parent company, the site accounted for 4.46 percent of all U.S. Internet visits for the week ending July 8, pushing it past Yahoo Mail for the first time and outpacing the home pages for Yahoo, Google and Microsoft's MSN Hotmail.

In addition to networking with other individuals, the site allows its members to speak their minds by posting bulletins and Web-logs, or blogs, on whatever they want.

According to Special Agent Mike Koellner from Detachment 206 of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations here, disclosing too much personal information is increasingly dangerous with the threat of identity theft.

"A thief can piece information together little by little. If they have your mother's name and your birth date, it's not that hard to get your Social Security Number," he said.

Fellow Special Agent Jared Whittenberg added, "You're putting yourself out there for all to see."

The Web site is a great tool to communicate with friends, said Agent Whittenberg, but servicemembers must be careful

not to post information that violates military rules and regulations.

Part of the responsibility of being a member of Air Force is properly representing it on and off duty. According to Agent Whittenberg, approximately 30 individuals here have already found themselves in trouble for posting inappropriate information, such as solicitation of homosexual prostitution, sensitive operational information and promotion of underage drinking.

Agent Whittenberg said operational security violations are one of OSI's primary concerns. In this day and age, maintaining OPSEC is critical to the nation's security, he said.

Posting information on deployments, numbers of troops in an area and aircraft capability can potentially put the nation at risk.

As a result of the increased popularity of MySpace, OSI now checks the site for incriminating information. "We don't constantly monitor (MySpace), but if an individual is under question, we will check the site, along with many other databases," said Agent Whittenberg.

The agents' message is that sites like MySpace must be used responsibly. "Servicemembers must remember they represent the military as a whole, 24 hours a day, and are responsible for what they post," said Agent Whittenberg. "The effects of what you do in the comfort of your own home can potentially have an impact worldwide."

## Nihon-go now

⇒ **How much are the apples?**

Ringo wa ikura desuka?  
(lin-go wa ee-koo-la deh-soo-ka.)

⇒ **When do they come back in season?**

Ringo no kisetsu wa itsuni narimasuka?  
(lin-go no kee-seh-tu wa it-soo-nee nah-lee-mah-soo-ka.)

# AD

## NCORP seeks to fill more than 1,100 shortage career field positions

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas. The 2007 Noncommissioned Officer Retraining Program began July 26 as the Air Force seeks to fill more than 1,100 shortage career field and special duty positions.

NCOs notified of their vulnerability to retrain must submit their shortage career field choices they would most like to retrain into or apply for a special duty assignment identifier no later than Sept. 18.

During the voluntary phase members have the opportunity to set the course of their future as Airmen," said Chief Master Sgt. Christine Williams, chief of the Air Force Personnel Center enlisted skills management branch here. "Many Airmen failed to act during the voluntary phase in 2006, and ultimately, 36 of those Airmen were separated under the involuntary NCORP phase so

there is a consequence for not applying for retraining."

Vulnerability listings by grade and Air Force Specialty Code will be posted on the virtual Military Personnel Flight July 26; vMPF is accessible from the Air Force Personnel Center home page at <http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>. By clicking on their grade or projected grade, NCOs may view their ranking on the vulnerability list and apply for retraining through the vMPF as needed.

Commander's support staff personnel will manage the retraining program and notify members if they are eligible. Additionally, they will suggest special duty identifiers such as recruiting, postal duty, military training instructor or professional military education instructor.

If voluntary measures are unsuccessful, the Air Staff

will implement Phase II, involuntary retraining. In Phase II, individuals identified as vulnerable in AFSCs not meeting retraining-out objectives, and without approved retraining or assignment to a special duty identifier by Sept. 18, will be involuntarily retrained.

"It's important for all Airmen to understand once they are identified for retraining in Phase I, they will continue to be vulnerable in Phase II unless they are retrained, released or separated from military service," said Master Sgt. Greg McClain, AFPC enlisted skills management branch superintendent.

For more information, Airmen should contact their CSS personnel, their base career assistance advisor or the Air Force Contact Center at (800) 665-5000.

*(Courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center News Service)*

## New pay system for GS employees based on performance, contribution

**By Master Sgt. Dominique Brown**  
374th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

A new Department of Defense wide initiative to pay General Schedule employees will be in affect in January of 2007. The National Security Personnel System will replace the current pay system and will compensate and reward employees based on performance and contribution to the mission while emphasizing accountability, flexibility and results.

The NSPS will require supervisors to evaluate an employee's performance under the systems objectives. The results of the evalu-

ation will affect the employees pay the following year.

"With this new system, an individual's work performance will directly affect their pay," said Maureen Weber, 374th Mission Support Squadron deputy civilian personnel officer. "NSPS is an exciting change to employee compensation – it makes it possible for management to financially recognize employees for the work they do."

The new system will also allow for flexibility to meet changing mission requirements. "Managers can set different objectives each year, not just in generic terms, but with specific goals that relate

to what is critical to the unit mission," said Ms. Weber. "One year an objective could be related to a major inspection, while the next year the objective could involve implementing a new program."

"NSPS will allow management to reward employees who take on a more responsible position, without being limited by previous pay setting rules related to promotion, reassignment or change to a lower pay grade," explained Ms. Weber.

Mandatory training is required for both the supervisor and the employee prior to the implementation of NSPS. The first step is for all civilian employees and military

supervisors of civilian employees to complete NSPS 101, an on-line course that takes approximately one hour. The Pacific Air Forces goal for completion of training is Sept. 1.

NSPS 101 introduces the nuts and bolts of the initiative—providing information about the conversion process, job classification, performance management, compensation, merit promotion and workforce shaping. It is located at <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/NSPS/NSPS101>.

"The more you understand about NSPS, the better prepared and more comfortable you will feel

about the conversion," said Ms. Weber.

Upon successful completion of NSPS 101, a training certificate will be generated. Individuals must provide a copy of the certificate to the civilian personnel flight for tracking. A faxed copy of the certificate can be sent to 225-9668 or dropped off at the CPF's front counter in building 316.

Federal Wage System employees will also convert to the new system, but not until October 2007.

For further information visit <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/index.html>, or contact Michale Williams at 225-3906/3916.

# AD

## Partnering with your doctor for effective communication

By Lt. Col. William Thomas  
374th Aerospace Medicine Squadron

Doctors and patients alike are concerned about getting enough time together during appointments. Our physicians' time is constrained by fewer staff and more patients, along with the same military-unique requirements most of us have to deal with. Summertime is particularly challenging in military hospitals and clinics, as many patients and physicians move in and out over the course of the summer.

One way to maximize the time you spend in the clinic is by having clear, concise communication. Patient satisfaction with any health care event positively relates to the effectiveness of the communication.

Here are some hints to help make the most of the time you spend with the doctor:

—Be direct. Your time is valuable and the doctor's time is limited so tell him/her up front what you want to discuss. Focus on a single problem, if possible, to ensure this topic is covered completely and you understand the plan for evaluation and care.

—Help to provide a good history. Write down the information about your illness or concern for the doctor in advance. Specific

questions will be asked about an acute illness that only you can provide. Be able to tell about the beginning of the illness and history of symptoms as they progressed each day. If you are having pain, the doctor will want to know about the nature of the pain and any specific things which relieve the pain or make it worse. Do your best to share this information with the technician who checks you into the exam room. They will be able to relay this to the doctor and the information can be put on the note sheet in advance. This saves time during the appointment by not having to give all of the information over again.

—Keep good records of yourself. If you have chronic medical conditions and have to make home assessments to report to the physician (sugar readings, blood pressures, breathing measurements), be sure to keep good records of these. I have found that a small pocket calendar dedicated to these measurements is ideal for patients and can be used to note when blood tests are ordered, or follow-up visits to the doctor are scheduled. Of course, you should keep a current list of all prescriptions and over-the-counter medications that you use. The doctor may not have any idea what "the little green pill for my blood pressure" is, so you need to be able to

tell the name, the dose, and when and how you take the medication. Write this medication list down in the front of your little calendar in pencil, so you can change it if you need to.

—Recognize that sometimes the diagnosis is not always immediately apparent. In cases, where continued observation, labs, X-rays or referrals are needed, it is really important for you to be able to relate the information concisely in follow up visits, or to specialty consultants.

—Finally, when if you don't understand something: ask! If you have questions about your medical condition, ask the doctor—it is his/her responsibility to answer your questions. If you have questions about a referral or questions about your medication, ask someone. Our team of technicians, nurses, pharmacists, and administrative support personnel will also do their best to get you the answers you need. I often hear from a commander or first sergeant about a patient's concern. After probing the issue some more to understand the concern, it is sometimes apparent that lots of frustration could have been avoided if the patient had directly engaged themselves with the health care system first.

## Seatbelt use saves more than lives; prevents injuries, loss of money

By Airman First Class Michael Brandt,  
374th Contracting Squadron

I'm sure many of you who are reading this article have already heard about the importance of wearing your seatbelt.

You already know the dangers related to not wearing them while driving. In this article I will outline some common things associated with seatbelt safety as well as some points you might not know.

I'm sure everyone knows about the concept of inertia. The definition states an object in motion stays in motion unless acted upon by an external force.

For example, in a head-on car collision with a drunk driver, the cars colliding would be the external force to stop each other, however the drivers inside are a different story. Let's say the drunk driver had a seatbelt on.

The seatbelt would be the external force that prevents the

driver from continuing to go at the same speed of the car prior to the collision, thus saving the driver from a fatality, allowing him to go to trial.

The other driver (lets make him a younger person) wasn't wearing a seatbelt.

The only external force that's going to stop this individual is either the steering wheel, (in which case he could survive with critical injuries) or the windshield, which he will be launched through with the force of a semi truck hitting him and ending up an unsightly mess on the street or the hood of the car.

As you can see the seatbelt is a small thing that can help make a difference between life and death.

I'm also aware about stories where seatbelts were detrimental and of arguments against the use of seatbelts. However, let me ask you this. If you didn't wear a seatbelt and were knocked unconscious, how could you escape from a burn-

ing vehicle?

How could you help yourself or anybody else involved in an accident if you were dead or unconscious? You couldn't unless a seatbelt stopped you right?

We all live or work on an Air Force installation, and one thing the Air Force tends to teach us over and over again is that every little detail affects the overall mission. Something as little as taking the time to buckle up could affect the entire picture...and your life.

Now on to something you might not know.

This deals with something we all wish we had more of. That's right, its money! Here are a few statistics from <http://www.car-accidents.com>:

—If 90 percent of Americans buckle up, we will prevent more than 5,500 deaths and 132,000 injuries annually.

—The cost of unbuckled drivers and passengers goes beyond those killed and the loss to their families. We all pay for

those who don't buckle up in higher taxes, higher health care and higher insurance costs.

—On average, inpatient hospital care costs for an unbelted crash victim are 50 percent higher than those for a belted crash victim. Society bears 85 percent of those costs, not the individuals involved.

—Every American pays about \$580 a year toward the cost of crashes. If everyone buckled up, this figure would drop significantly.

So if the usual banter on the importance of seatbelts doesn't get you to wear them, maybe this information will.

Parents, make sure you teach your children about buckling up. However, telling them isn't as important as being a role model. So when you tell your kids to buckle up, make sure you practice what you preach.

By doing this we will be able to reduce the amount of lives and money lost, and help accomplish the mission.



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The deadline for articles, briefs and classifieds is Wednesday the week before publication. For holidays, the deadline is one day earlier.

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## DUI Prevention

July 26 – Aug. 1	1
Total DUIs in July	2
Total in 2006	9

### Punishment

.049 or less = car parked for 12 hours
.05-.079 = 6 months walking
.081-.149 = 1 year walking
0.15 or greater = 2 years walking

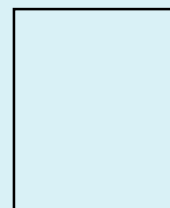
*Don't  
drink and drive.  
Call 225-RIDE!*

## Action Line

**E-mail: [action.lines-1@yokota.af.mil](mailto:action.lines-1@yokota.af.mil)**

The Action Line is your direct line to me. Use it if you have questions or comments about Yokota, which couldn't be resolved by your chain of command first. When you send an e-mail, please include your name and phone number so you can be reached if more information is needed.

**Col. Scott Goodwin**  
374th Airlift Wing Commander





# Spouses Clubs support the community



photos by Master Sgt. Dominique Brown

**Above, Yokota Officers Spouses Club member, Becky Kendrick, puts consignment items on display as a volunteer at the thrift shop on base run by the YOSC. Customers can leave up to 12 consignment items at a time and will receive 80 percent of the sale price for the item. Right, Lynn Sleeth, YOSC member and volunteer, rings up a purchase for customer Vita Haire. The thrift store is open to all who have base access and the hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Mondays and Fridays and the first Saturday of the month. All proceeds from the thrift store go to the YOSC college scholarship fund.**

**By Jennifer Hensley**  
Fuji Flyer contributor

For a group of men and women at Yokota, baking cookies, organizing fundraisers and giving away money for college are all in a day's work. Literally hundreds of members do this and more all in the name of two very important organizations – the Yokota Enlisted Spouses Club and the Yokota Officers Spouses Club.

The Yokota Enlisted Spouses Club, or YESC, was officially founded about six years ago although individual squadrons have long had support groups for enlisted members. As a blanket organization, the YESC is unique in that the club brings together individuals from just about every walk of life.

The Enlisted Spouses club president, Sasha Holloway, says one of the most important things about the YESC is that there is a place for everybody. "We serve to support not only active duty spouses but also spouses of retired military, civilian employees at Yokota and also active duty members. Our motto is 'every spouse counts' – and they do."

In addition to providing support for spouses and their families, the YESC also serves to help out students and single Airmen, too. This year, the YESC gave out several scholarships to deserving students.

"Through our fundraising efforts, we were able to give out \$2,000 to high school students last spring," said Mrs. Holloway. "This fall, we plan to give out \$2,500 in scholarships to spouses who are continuing their education."

The club's biggest, and probably most popular event takes place in December. The Cookie Crunch is an annual event that provides baked goods to single soldiers and shift workers during the holidays. The YESC collects cookies in the form of donations and sets up shop in the base chapel to sort and deliver them.

Although the group relies on the combined efforts of their own members and outside volunteers to bake and deliver the cookies, the group spends literally hundreds of hours planning and staffing the event. "The Cookie Crunch is definitely one of our more visible events. We love to do it. It puts something tangible in the hands of Yokota's Airmen to let them know we support them," said Mrs. Holloway.

Just like the Enslited Spouses Club, the Yokota Officers Spouses Club, or YOSC, sees fundraising and philanthropy as the

heart of their organization.

"I think the most important function of the Yokota Officers Spouses Club is providing scholarship money for children and spouses who are either graduating high school and entering college, continuing their education after college in graduate school or going back to school after taking some time off," said Kristi Rogers, the vice president of the organization.

"In addition, the YOSC provides a way for spouses to meet other people and get involved in the community after just moving to a new base," said Mrs. Rogers.

The YOSC's largest event is their annual Asian Bazaar, held twice a year in the fall and spring. The bazaars represent the most sizeable source of revenue for their welfare budget, which is then returned to the Yokota community through donations to schools, libraries and family and youth programs.

"The bazaars are by far our most popular events," said Mrs. Rogers. "Not only do we showcase local vendors, but we also feature suppliers from all over the world. In the past years, we have been able to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for our community."

The YOSC also operates a thrift shop here on base and donates the proceeds from the shop to their own scholarship fund. This year they awarded money for continuing education to 16 graduating seniors and seven spouses.

"The best aspect of each organization is that we work hard to provide support for everybody here on base," said Mrs. Holloway. "Whether you're the spouse of a new enlisted Airman, you've been married to an officer for ten years or you're active duty and looking for a way to help Yokota, there's a spouses club for you."

Both organizations hold monthly meetings. The YESC meets the first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Enlisted Club's Kobayashi ballroom. The YOSC meets on the last Tuesday of each month. For more information on how you can join, log on to their websites at <http://www.yesc.org> or <http://www.yosc.org>.



# AD



## “Quotes” & Things

*“You’re only as good  
as your limitations,  
and I don’t have any.”*

**Edgar Jones,  
former Cleveland  
Cavaliers center**

**Youth Basketball:** Operation Night Hoops is a basketball team that offers teens the opportunity to play and improve while learning teamwork through the Teen Center. Call 225-6793.

**Lifeguard class:** A lifeguard class is scheduled for Aug. 14 through 25 at the Natatorium. The cost is \$75 and includes books and CPR mask. Students must attend every class to become certified. Individuals must pass a swim test prior to signing up for the course. Call 225-6133 for more information.

**Ekiden road relay:** The 17th annual Camp Zama ekiden road relay will be held at Sagami Depot on Oct. 1 at 8 a.m. There is no registration fee for SOFA status personnel. Call 263-7980 for more information.

**Youth sports camps:** Sign up at the East Youth Center for the following youth sports camps, cost is \$5.:

– Soccer Camp for ages five to 18 Aug. 7-11 from 5:30 to 7 p.m., at Tachi Field.

– Wrestling Camp for ages five to 18, Aug. 7-11 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., at the West Youth Center.

– Baseball Camp for ages five to 10 Aug. 7-11, and ages 11-18 Aug. 13-18, at Darling Field.

**Self defense class:** Learn how to protect yourself. A female-only self defense class is held at the West Youth Center on Saturdays from 1 to 3 p.m. \$40 per month. Call 225-7441.

## Skate park builds future X-Gamers

**By Capt. Ben Alumbaugh**  
374th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Skateboarding originally gained popularity as an offshoot of surfing in the 1950s, but for a long time existed outside the mainstream sports culture.

In recent times the sport has grown in popularity based in part on the “X-Games,” an Olympic style event for extreme sports outside of the mainstream.

At Yokota Air Base, people interested in pursuing skateboarding, bicycle freestyle or rollerblading can utilize the skate park on the east side.

“The skate park is very convenient and provides a safe environment for the young adults to practice their skateboarding skills,” said Johnny Jones, parent. “I am very comfortable knowing my son is there at the park. He has been using it since it opened in 2003.”

Jacob Cast has been using the park for two years and said it defiantly has some challenging ramps, rails and fun boxes. “I come here almost everyday in the summer unless it is raining, I don’t know what else I would do if the skate park was not here.”

Skateboarding can be enjoyed by children as young as two years, but the majority of pro skaters’ range from early teens to early twenties. Most skateboarders don’t use any formal training, or have a special diet. Skaters just do what they love to do: skate – all the time. Skateboarding can be fun and when having fun is the goal, it never seems like training.

“This is a great place for everyone to go and learn new tricks,” said Johnny Jones, II. “It keeps us out of trouble and we can hang out with our friends.”



photos by Master Sgt. Dominique Brown

**Jacob Cast, above left, performs a backside boardslide on the rail at Yokota’s skate park on the east side. Austin Dedeo, above right perfects the “Indy” jump which he said is simple but fun. Jordan Kelker, bottom left, performs an “Ollie” over cones. Johnny Jones, II., bottom right, launches into the air off the quarter pipe. The park gives a safe and legal place to practice their skills seven days a week. The park was opened in 2003 as a quality of life initiative to provide more recreation opportunities for youth on base.**



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